



The President's Daily Brief

26 January 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The fedayeen are charging the Jordanian Government with violations of the latest cease-fire agreement. (Page 1)

Lon Nol and Sirik Matak appear to have retained their strong resolve despite the wave of terrorist incidents. (Page 2)

Army dissidents led by General Amin appear to be in control of the Ugandan capital following the coup yesterday. (Page 3)

Tokyo's attitude on Voice of America operations in Okinawa is another example of its growing independent approach in relations with the US. (Page 4)

The Polish Government has announced preparations for granting the Church legal title to former German church lands that are under regime control. (Page 5)

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FEDAYEEN-JORDAN

The fedayeen central committee has charged that Jordanian authorities have failed to comply with the terms of the cease-fire of 13 January, although it claims the fedayeen fulfilled all their obligations by the deadline of 23 January. The central committee accuses the government of attempting to stir up an anti-fedayeen and anti-Palestinian campaign among the Jordanian public and of encouraging armed attacks on fedayeen offices in Jordan. Meanwhile, in a broadcast from Algeria, Yasir Arafat has claimed that Jordanian authorities are collaborating with the US and Israel to crush the guerrilla movement and force it to surrender to Israel. Arafat predicted the regime would not honor the latest cease-fire agreement and called for the dispatch of troops from other Arab countries to Jordan and its borders.

These accusations appear designed mainly to keep up morale among the frayed fedayeen groups in Jordan. Jordanian Premier Wasfi Tal has adopted a tough line in responding to the commandos, claiming the fedayeen are merely making excuses for the failure of their guerrilla campaign against Israel. He made it clear that the government would again use force if the commandos disrupted the present cease-fire agreement.

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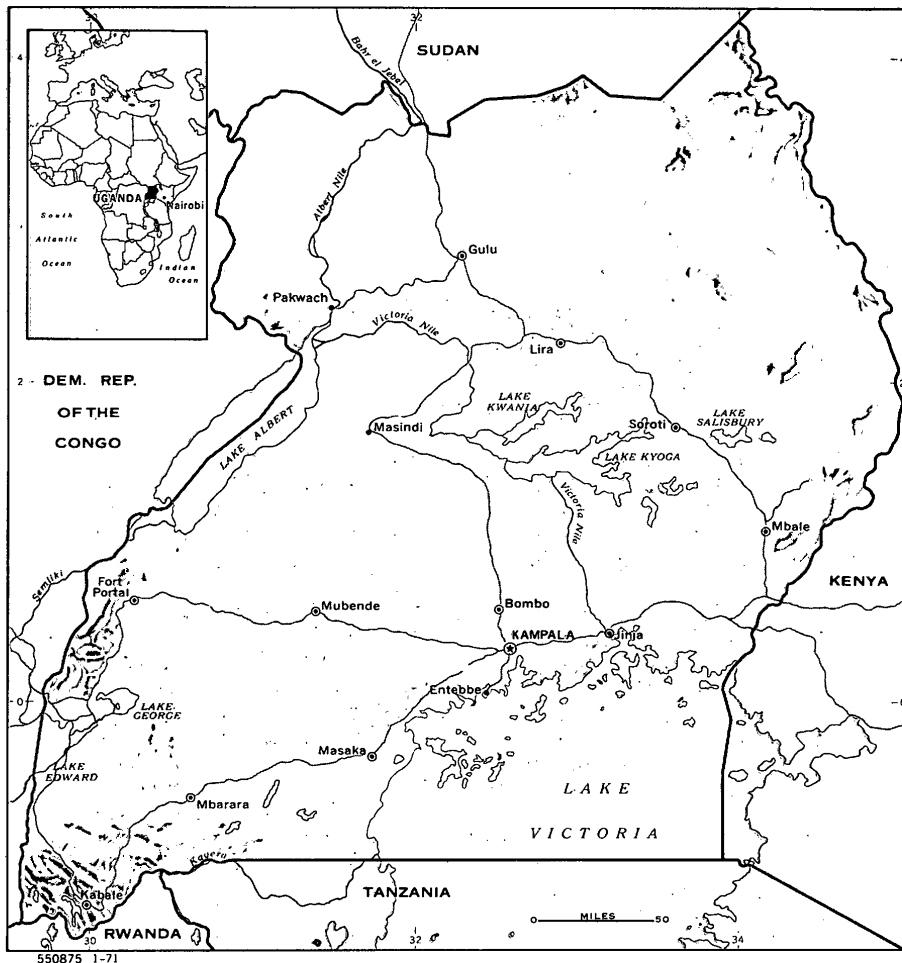
CAMBODIA

In a private meeting with Lon Nol and Sirik Matak yesterday, Ambassador Swank found them both in an excellent frame of mind. Lon Nol in particular exhibited his customary confidence and did not appear at all daunted by the incidents of sabotage and terrorism that followed the heavy attack on Pochentong airfield. Lon Nol said the enemy was in the process of being rooted out of the environs of the capital, and security of key installations was "being assured." *(Although the Cambodians are making an effort to secure the capital, it is unlikely--given their inexperience--that they can guarantee the safety of key points.)*

When Ambassador Swank asked for their reading of the political situation in Phnom Penh, both agreed that the populace is more apprehensive (Sirik Matak said, "War is no longer theoretical but real"), but they saw no weakening in public resolve to stand up against the enemy.

Ambassador Swank came away with the impression that their own strong resolve has not been weakened by recent events and that they remain convinced their cause ultimately will triumph. He notes that the hardships and the tragedy of war are now being brought home to the average Khmer in the capital, and that some intellectuals and the military already are searching for scapegoats. Ambassador Swank's judgment is that these trends do not currently have serious implications for the positions of these two leaders.

UGANDA



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UGANDA

Army dissidents led by General Idi Amin appear to be in control of the Ugandan capital of Kampala following the coup yesterday against President Milton Obote. They effectively enforced a curfew in the capital last night and troops have closed the nearby airport at Entebbe. Radio Uganda is broadcasting statements claiming that Amin acted to rid the government of corruption and to restore public confidence. Amin describes his government as merely a caretaker administration and says he intends to return the government to civilian hands in due course.

The coup was clearly timed to coincide with Obote's absence at the Commonwealth conference in Singapore, but little is known yet about other circumstances of the take-over. It is not clear how much support Amin has, even within the army which is shot through with personal and tribal factionalism. Amin has been at odds with other senior officers and he may have acted with only a small number of supporters.

Rumors were widespread yesterday that Obote would try to return to the country, but he remained in Nairobi last night and there was no firm indication of his immediate plans. The situation could remain unstable for some time even if Obote does not return. Amin will be hard-pressed to handle the factionalism in the army, that only mirrors the tribal divisions within the country's general population.

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JAPAN-OKINAWA

The latest example of Japan's growing independent approach in its relations with the US, as discussed in The President's Daily Brief Annex on 23 December, comes in Tokyo's response to the US request to allow Voice of America operations to continue after 1972 when the island is scheduled to revert to Japan.

The Japanese Government informed the US late last week that the Voice of America facilities will have to be removed upon reversion. In conveying this decision, a high Foreign Office official told the US Embassy that Japan was rejecting the US request not only because of laws forbidding foreign broadcasting from Japanese soil, but also because of long-standing public sensitivity to such activity. He added that it would be extremely difficult to build the political consensus necessary to amend the laws and that the political reaction would likely be serious if any amendments were "rammed through."

The official also cited fear of offending Communist China at a time of what he termed "delicate change" in the international situation. Every possible alternative had been considered, he claimed, but no formula had been found that would not create insurmountable domestic political problems.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTE

Poland: The government announced preparations yesterday for granting the Roman Catholic Church legal title to former German church lands that are under regime control. Title would not revert to the church before the Vatican has recognized Poland's western border--a move that is unlikely until ratification of the Polish - West German treaty--but the announcement is an important gesture by the regime toward reconciliation with the church. It will help the government to enlist the support of the Polish episcopate and is designed to improve in general its standing with the strongly religious population.

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Normal work appears to have resumed in areas along the Baltic coast following the visit of party leader Gierek and Premier Jaroszewicz to Szczecin and Gdansk.

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